

*The Budget*

Having said that, what would the hon. member think would be an appropriate figure for our subsidization agreement?

**Mr. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, the member is specifically asking about what level subsidies should be at in terms of grain exports. Talking about grain exports specifically, the level has to be reduced over time. My goal and the goal farmers have told me they would like achieved some time down the road—and I cannot say exactly whether it might be six years or ten years—would be as close to zero as possible.

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan):** Mr. Speaker, I heard the Minister of Finance during the budget presentation say that he was looking for \$400 million to be cut from operating budgets of government departments in the next year and a further \$1.5 billion in the subsequent three years. I have a suggestion for where the minister could find that amount of money.

• (1805)

His budget speech was very impressive. I was really caught up in it. He said: "The budget being tabled today follows an unprecedented process of consultation with Canadians. We have gained a great deal from listening to Canadians but one thing stands above all others: Canadians are fed up with government inertia. They seek determined fundamental change. Canadians know the kind of Canada they want".

I was really impressed with those words. I was therefore a little surprised to find that the minister and the government had not been doing the consulting they pretended to do. They came up with nothing, for example, in the way of cuts to official languages. I hear from my constituents in Nanaimo—Cowichan that it is one place where cuts should surely be made.

I wonder too if the hon. Minister of Finance was consulting with his own colleagues. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier across the way said on January 27: "A serious study should be undertaken by an individual to determine whether the Official Languages Act is working as intended". I agree with the hon. member. A serious study should be undertaken. My impression and that of my constituents is that it is not working and it is costing far too much.

Before I go further I would like to correct an impression of the Bloc Quebecois on what the Reform Party policy is on official languages.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe said, "If they think that English should be the only official language of the federal government, they should say so clearly". I would like to say clearly that we do not think that English should be the only official language. There must be two official languages, English

and French, everywhere. But it must here in Parliament, in the courts and in government offices.

[English]

The Reform Party's official policy on bilingualism is that we support individual bilingualism. We support territorial bilingualism as far as the federal government is concerned, that is to say—and let us take Quebec as a specific example—services must be given in the French language throughout the province of Quebec because obviously the numbers warrant it. Within the city of Montreal it is evident that services in the English language should be given in the regions of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Saint-Luc, Beaconsfield, et cetera.

[Translation]

Services must be provided in the appropriate languages wherever there is a need.

[English]

Let us now move to another phase of why I am tackling official bilingualism. I underline again that we are in favour of bilingualism, personal bilingualism. Let us have more of it, but official bilingualism is divisive in the country and is wasteful. It is a terrible waste of money.

• (1810)

How wasteful is it? I quote from Diane Francis in the *Financial Post*: "Translating technical documents involves the 500,000-page technical manuals for two new frigates currently under construction. A full translation of these manuals would cost \$100 million".

In their defence National Defence and Supply and Services shot back that the real cost could reach \$43.5 million. Unfortunately the real cost of translating those manuals will likely never be known since it will be buried in the overall cost of the frigates. That is one of the big problems we have not only with government but with estimates and everything else. Costs are buried and it is very hard to find them.

Another problem I have with the official languages policy in the country is that it is a product of the Ottawa elite. The elite in Ottawa says and has said for a number of years that this is what we should be pushing, that it will be wonderful for the whole country and it will certainly help keep Quebec in. I do not believe that is true and I do not believe the people of Quebec believe it is true either; not official bilingualism as it is practised here.

Typical of the attitude embraced by the Ottawa elite is the official languages commissioner who was recently quoted as saying: "We must not be deterred by the opposition which there is in public opinion. They are great adversaries with whom we have to attend". That was in spite of or perhaps because of a March 1992 Gallup poll which showed that 64 per cent of Canadians believe official bilingualism has been a failure.